



## @USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

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U.S. Department of Defense

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or find it online at [www.navy.mil/cnp](http://www.navy.mil/cnp)

## **1.) DoD Releases 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing Rates / 15 DEC 15 [\[LINK\]](#)**

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WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Department of Defense has released the 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing rates. Basic Allowance for Housing rates will increase an average of 3.4 percent when the new rates take effect Jan. 1. An estimated \$21 billion will be paid to approximately one million Service members. On average, Basic Allowance for Housing rates will increase approximately \$54 per month.

Continuing to slow the growth in compensation costs, the 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing Program expands the member cost-sharing element (out-of-pocket expense). Based on the authority provided in the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, the cost-sharing element was increased to two percent.

The cost-sharing amounts incorporated in the 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing rates vary by grade and dependency status and range from \$24 to \$57 monthly. This means for 2016, a typical member will need to absorb two percent of the national average housing cost by pay grade.

This rate computation change slows the growth of certain military pay and benefits in a fair, responsible, and sustainable way. Even with these nominal changes, the overall military pay and benefits package remains robust and healthy.

Housing cost data are collected annually for over 300 Military Housing Areas in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. An important part of the Basic Allowance for Housing process is the cooperation from the Services and local military housing offices in the data collection effort.

Input from local commands is used to determine in what neighborhoods data is collected and to direct the data collection effort towards adequate apartment complexes and individual housing units.

Median current market rent and average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer) comprise the total housing cost for each military housing area and are included in the Basic Allowance for Housing computation.

Total housing costs are developed for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each military housing area. Basic Allowance for Housing rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents.

An integral part of the Basic Allowance for Housing program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs - including the out-of-pocket cost sharing adjustment noted above, an individual member who maintains uninterrupted Basic Allowance for Housing eligibility in a given location will not see his/her Basic Allowance for Housing rate decrease.

This ensures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease.

The Department is committed to the preservation of a compensation and benefit structure that provides members with a suitable and secure standard of living to sustain a trained, experienced, and ready force now and in the future.

For more information on Basic Allowance for Housing, including the 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing rates and 2016 Basic Allowance for Housing rate component breakdown, visit [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm)

Service members can calculate their BAH payment by using the Basic Allowance for Housing calculator at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm).

## **2.) Seabag Allowances Fall For 2016 with NWU Down-Size / 13 DEC 15**

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Every year, the Navy gives sailors an anniversary present — sort of.

It's called your annual clothing replacement allowance — money sailors are expected to use it to replace any worn-out uniform items.

Nearly everyone will see their annual allowance drop due to a decrease in the required number of sets of Navy working uniforms from four sets to three, because they're no longer allowed at sea due to fire risks.

New uniforms are also being factored in. Female chiefs will receive \$56.74 to pay for the new combination cover modeled off those worn by male peers, which they're required to own by October 2016.

Women E-6 and below, however, are still required to maintain their "bucket" hat, as they won't be required to own the "Dixie cup" until 2020. But they can wear this sailor hat with service dress whites starting in November 2016.

Women will get additional dough to buy their new blue crackerjacks in later years.

Sailors get two kinds of uniform allowances: basic and standard. Those with three-years or fewer service get the basic allowance, because, officials say, they've just gotten their initial issue uniforms, which won't wear out within three years.

These allowances are paid annually in your end-of-the-month paycheck of your "anniversary month" — the month you entered boot camp.

Also, this is one time enlisted can thank their lucky stars: Officers don't get clothing replacement allowances — by law, they're expected to foot the bill for uniforms out of pocket — a Navy tradition dating back to 1775 that recently sparked controversy.

The standard allowance for E-6 and below men is \$457.20, \$36.54 less than last year. For women of the same ranks, they'll get \$468.00, \$29.42 less than last year.

Chiefs get a different standard allowance. For male chiefs, it's \$649.46, \$54.48 less than last year. Female chiefs garner \$669.60, a drop of \$50.96.

What you get each year factors in the cost and number of uniforms required by their expected wear life. The biggest change this year comes from downsizing the blue-and-gray cammies to three sets.

Officials say each set lasts 24 months. Three sets of NWU blouses cost \$114.45, so factoring in that you're paid each year to replace half a set equals a CRA of \$19.08.

### **3.) Sailors Wanted on Spaceships / 16 DEC 15 [\[LINK\]](#)**

Defense Media Activity

Applications for the space program are now being accepted, and in an attempt to cast the net as wide as possible, it has been opened up to enlisted service members as well as officers.

"It is really valuable here to have people who come from different backgrounds," said Capt. Suni Williams, naval Astronaut. "They look at problems differently, they solve problems differently, and it allows us to look at the best solutions for the things that we're doing and then put those into practice."

To date, only 338 Astronauts have been chosen and currently there are only seven active duty Astronauts.

"The military is a great way to prepare for this career," said Glover. "We focus a lot on leadership and on technical and or tactical development and the application of technology to solving a problem. We deploy to austere locations with small teams to accomplish a mission."

All Applicants must have a four year degree in a science, engineering, or math and a minimum of three years of experience in their field after their degree was conferred. Applicants must be physically fit with 20/20 vision and blood pressure not to exceed 140/90. Applicants must also be between 62 and 75 inches. There are no age restrictions, but applicants are required to be U.S. Citizens.

The selection process is quite involved and takes a long time given the number of applications received. For example, during the last selection NASA received 6100 applications and selected eight people as Astronaut Candidates. One of those selections was Glover.

Both Glover and Williams applied to the space program twice and both were accepted the second time around.

"You can apply as many times as you want to apply to the astronaut corps and I would suggest that people start applying as soon as possible because then you get to know the process," said Williams. "The process is not as straight forward as just sending an application in. That is just first the step. As we look for the right candidate there are a lot of things that go into decision process."

"Your applications should read like a long resume and include a summary of your professional experience, your education, hobbies and interests, if you've publish things, research that you've been involved with, if you've had expeditionary experience, being deployed to austere locations, surviving in extreme environments, anything you've done for team sports or group expeditions," said Glover. "Those are the types of things you want to highlight on the application."

From the large pool of applicants NASA has to figure out who they are bringing in for an initial interview. After that round of interviews they narrow the pool even further and bring the remaining applicants out for a second round of interviews. For this interview you are required to do group tasks, take a lot of tests and go through a very extensive physical examination. NASA collects all of the information and then makes their final selections.

"The biggest challenge during the application process is the silence," said Glover. "It's when you don't hear anything. It's waiting and wondering. I applied in 2008 for the 2009 class and I didn't get anything. Once it was all said and done I got a letter saying 'hey thanks kid, try again.' Getting an interview is all you can really hope for. After that it's up to you and how you perform in the interview."

Once a candidate is selected they are sent to what Glover called Astronaut Boot Camp.

Selectees are called astronaut candidates until they finish the astronaut candidate training requirements, which is a two-year program. There are five core areas in the curriculum: International space station systems, foreign language training, robotics, T-38 fully qualified Team Member, and candidates have to be capable of doing spacewalk training at the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, one of the world's largest indoor pools used for mission planning, procedure development, hardware verification, astronaut training and refinement of time-critical operations necessary to ensure mission success during spacewalks.

"When we are looking at applicants, of course we've got people who have got the minimum academic requirements that we mention in the application process," said Williams.

And for Sailors, most of the conditions they operate in could be considered odd. Glover said that living on board a ship, in a submarine, a tent, any austere condition is already a step in preparing for life as an astronaut.

"To anybody out there who looks at the application and thinks for a moment they want to do this, I would say apply, apply, apply," said Williams. "There is just no reason you shouldn't apply, and don't be discouraged if you don't get in the first time around. We will probably have selections every couple of years or so as the program gets solidified, so keep applying. And don't worry if it seems like time is going by and I'm getting a little older. We are sending people who are established in their careers so we can have sure bets that they are good leaders, they're good followers, they play well together, they are team members."

For Glover, a relatively new member to the team, it hasn't quite sunk in that he is an astronaut, but for Williams, who was selected to the program in 1998, it sunk in during her first trip into space.

"I actually don't think it sinks in until you are on that rocket and the engines light," said Williams. "For those 7.5 to 8 minutes to get to space you are on the high of that rollercoaster. When you start to float you are like, 'oh my God this is the most incredible thing.' But once you are up there and you are working, you are just that guy doing your job and when you come home you're just that guy here doing your job."

However, the absolute coolness of the job is not lost on either of them, and they also love seeing what they do represented on the big screen. Both were big fans of Matt Damon's character in the Martian.

"Matt Damon did a great job and I was a big fan," said Glover. "Matthew McConaughey's role in Interstellar was great; you know if there's a movie about space I probably dig it. But I have to say, above and beyond all of that, after the selection message was announced I got a phone call, and the person on the other end says 'hey, just wanted to call and congratulate you and to say good luck, you know I won't be able to see you when you guys first get there but I'll be back in a couple of months.' So I'm wracking my brain trying to figure out who this is, and I finally realize it was Chris Cassidy. He called me from the space station. So Matt Damon and Matthew McConaughey are cool but Chris Cassidy called me from space! So he's kind of high up there in my book right now."

For more information on applying for the Space Program visit NPC's Astronaut Candidate page. <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/distribution/Pages/Space-Cadre.aspx>. The application process will close out Feb. 18, 2016. NASA will be accepting applications via a vacancy job announcement posted at USA Jobs. All applications must be submitted electronically.

#### **4.) Top Sailors, Instructors Honored by Navy Training Headquarters / 14 DEC 15 [\[LINK\]](#)**

Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

PENSACOLA, Fla. (NNS) -- The selections were made from staff at the more than 230 training commands and units throughout the enterprise.

Rear Adm. Mike White, commander, Naval Education and Training Command praised the SOY, four IOYs and the finalists in each category for work they do developing the Navy's newest Sailors, while providing a continuum of training to support Sailors throughout their careers.

"You are here today because you stood out amongst the 8,000 military instructors- you are the Elite," said Rear Admiral Mike White, command Naval Education and Training Command. "Each and every one of you innovate, challenge assumptions and lead change throughout our domain."

The 2015 NETC Sailor of the Year is Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 1st Class (IDW/SW) Stephen Comstock, from the Center for Information Dominance Detachment at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. He's been in the Navy for 16 years and is the course supervisor for the Navy Analysis and Reporting Course.

"Training provides the foundation for the next generation of sea warriors on which they can enhance their skills," Comstock said when asked why it is important for highly qualified Sailor to volunteer for instructor duty. "With high caliber Sailors providing the training, it ensures that every Sailor sent into the fleet has the same solid foundation on which to build their careers, and in turn, guiding the future of our Navy."

Comstock will go forward to compete as NETC's representative in the Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (MPTE) domain's top Sailor competition.

The 2015 NETC Instructors of the Year (junior/midgrade/senior/officer) are:

Junior - Builder 2nd Class (SCW/EXW) Travis Klawonn, Center for Security Forces Detachment North Island, San Diego.

Midgrade - Information Systems Technician 1st Class (IDW/SW/AW) Aaron Bond, Center for Information Dominance Unit Corry Station, Pensacola.

Senior -- Chief Machinist Mate (SW/AW) Duane McCarty, Submarine Learning Facility, Norfolk, Virginia.

Officer -- Lt. Ann Bednash, Center for Information Dominance Unit, San Diego.

The finalists traveled to NETC headquarters where the final selections were made. NETC Force Command Career Counselor Master Chief Jake Brady coordinated the SOY and IOY programs for the NETC enterprise and the week of events in Pensacola which included group physical fitness runs in the morning, tours of area training commands to trade ideas and concepts, uniform inspections and, for the SOY candidates, responding to questions from a panel of master chief petty officers on everything from Navy heritage to leadership, policies and programs.

"NETC is a massive enterprise and our work touches the lives and careers of every Sailor in the Navy," Brady said. "The Sailors selected for training duty are some of the best in the fleet. That tells you a lot about the candidates we had to choose from and how hard the selection was."

According to NETC Force Master Chief Jon Port, the finalists this year were some of the finest Sailors he's seen in his career.

"This generation of Sailors is a different breed from those I knew as a young Sailor," Port said, who has served for 30 years. "They honor the heritage of our Navy while looking boldly into the future and the vast possibilities that are waiting to be discovered. Our Navy and our Republic are in great hands."

"Through all the challenges and changes ahead, this group of Sailors led our efforts. That is truly why they represent the best of an outstanding military and civilian organization training the future and present fleet."

The NETC SOY and IOY programs recognize Sailors throughout the NETC domain who exhibit sustained superior performance, leadership, mentorship, knowledge and teaching of military history and heritage, self-improvement, command and community involvement and exemplary military bearing among other attributes.

To learn more about the Naval Education and Training Command, visit the NETC website:

<https://www.netc.navy.mil> or on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/NavalEducationAndTrainingCommand/?fref=ts>

For more news from Naval Education and Training Command, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cnet/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cnet/).

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